

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /087 W
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R 212204Z DEC 77
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6417
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, ES
SUBJECT: ALLEGATIONS OF IRREGULARITIES IN DECEMBER 18 ELECTIONS
OF UNION COMUNAL SALVADORENA (UCS)

REF: SAN SALVADOR A-55

SUMMARY: IN CONTACTS WITH EMBOFFS, SANTIAGO TOMAS ROMERO PERLA, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNION COMUNAL SALVADORENA (UCS) ALLEGED IRREGULARITIES IN THE DECEMBER 18 ELECTIONS FOR A NEW NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL. HE STATED THAT AT THE CONGRESS OF THE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY HELD FOR THE PURPOSE OF THESE ELECTIONS SUPPORTERS OF TITO CASTRO, TECHNICAL ADVISOR TO THE UCS (WHO RECEIVES A SALARY FROM AIFLD), HAD ENGAGED IN DISRUPTIVE TACTICS AND INTRODUCED DELEGATES WITHOUT PROPER CREDENTIALS. THE CAMACHO-ROMERO PERLA GROUP STATED THAT AS A CONSEQUENCE, THEY SUSPENDED THE CONGRESS BUT THAT THE TITO CASTO GROUP ILLEGALLY REINSTATED THE CONGRESS AND ELECTED A NEW CEN. THE CAMACHO-ROMERO PERLA GROUP STATE THAT A NEW CONGRESS WILL HAVE TO BE HELD. IN THE MEANTIME,
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THEY ASKT THAT THE TITO CASTRO GROUP CALLING ITSELF THE NEW NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (OSTENSIBLY HEADED BY JOSE RODOLFO VIERA LIZAMA, A TITO CASTRO SUPPORTER) SHOULD NOT BE RECOGNIZED. THERE WERE APPARENTLY NO NEUTRAL OR IMPARTIAL OBSERVERS AT THE ELECTIONS, SO IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE THE TRUTH OF THESE ALLEGATIONS.
END SUMMARY.

1. ON DECEMBER 18, THE CONGRESS OF THE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION COMUNAL SALVADORENA (UCS) MET TO HLD ELECTIONS TO THE THIRTEEN-MAN NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (CEL). IT WAS HOPED THAT THESE ELECTIONS WOULD RESOLVE THE LON-FESTERING DISPUTE BETWEEN ROBERTO ("TITO") CASTO, TECHNICAL ADVISOR TO THE UCS, AND JORGE ALBERTO CAMACHO, ADMINISTRATIVE ADVISOR TO THE UCS, (AND ALLEGED GOVERNMENT AGENT IN UCS) OVER FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING PROBLEMS OF THE OGRANIZATION (SEE REF). THE DISPUTE HAD REACHED THE STAGE WHERE AN ANTI-CASTRO MAJORITY ON THE CEN HAD LAS JULY STOPPED THE PAYMENT OF THE SALARY RECEIVED BY CASTRO FROM THE UCS. HOWEVER, CASTRO CONTINUED TO RECEIVE HIS SALARY FROM AIFLD, VIA CHECKS MAILED FROM AUDS CARACAS.

2. GOING INTO THE ELECTIONS, CAMACHO OSTENSIBLY HAD SANTIAGO TOMAS ROMERO PERLA, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UCS, AND SEVEN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL BEHIND HIM WHILE CASTRO COUNTED ON THE SUPPORT OF FIVE MEMBERS. THE CEN, BY MEANS OF A LETTER SIGNED BY ALL THIRTEEN MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL, SOUGHT TO HAVE AN INTERVIEW WITH THE AMBASSADOR BEFORE THE ELECTIONS. THIS PROPOSAL WAS MOST ACTIVELY PROMOTED BY CAMACHO AND ROMERO PERLA AND MET ONLY WITH THE MOST GRUDGING SUPPORT OF THE CASTRO GROUP, WHICH REPORTEDLY INTENDED NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE INTERVIEW. THE EMBASSY DID NOT THINK THE INVITATION OPPORTUNE, IN VIEW OF THE UPCOMING ELECTIONS, AND ADOPTED A STRICTLY NEUTRAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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POLICY, NOT WISHING TO INTERFERE OR TO APPEAR TO INTERFERE IN ANY WAY WITH THE ELECTIONS.

3. INVITATIONS FROM THE CEN WERE RECEIVED BY THE AMBASSADOR AND EMBOFFS TO OBSERVE THE ELECTIONS BUT DUE TO THE EMBASSY'S POLICY OF STRICT NEUTRALITY AND THE LATE DATE (DECEMBER 16) THE INVITATIONS WERE RECEIVED, NO OBSERVERS FROM THE EMBASSY WERE PRESENT. DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE INVITATIONS WERE MAILED SO LATE, THERE WERE APPARENTLY NO OBSERVERS FROM THE GOES OR OTHER OBSERVERS PRESENT AT THE ELECTIONS.

4. ON MORNING OF DECEMBER 19, POLITICAL OFFICER AND LABOR OFFICER RECEIVED HAND-DELIVERED LETTER SIGNED BY ROMERO PERLA AND SEVEN OTHER MEMBERS OF THE CEN STATING THAT THE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UCS HAD BEEN QTE SUSPENDED UNQTE DUE TO THE ACTIONS OF JOSE RODOLFO VIERA, ARTURO MAGANA, AND MARIO RAMIREZ (ALL OF THEM, ACCORDING TO OUR INFORMATION, PART OF THE TITO CASTRO FACTION) AND OTHER CASTRO SUPPORTERS. THE LETTER ALLEGES THAT THE SUPPORTERS OF CASTRO REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THE AUTHORITY OF THE PRESIDING OFFICER, THAT VIERA AND RAMIREZ QTE ALTERED UNQTE THE RULES GOVERNING THE ASSEMBLY

IN VIOLATION OF THE UCS STATUTES AND EL SALVADOREAN LAWS, INCITED THE DELEGATES QTE IN A VIOLENT MANNER UNQTE, TO NOT RECOGNIZE THE PRESIDING OFFICER, AND THAT MAGANA BROUGHT INTO THE ASSEMBLY PEOPLE QTE WITHOUT THE PROPER CREDENTIALS FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING DISORDER AND CARRYING OUT THE VOTE IN A FRAUDULENT MANNER UNQTE.

5. FOR THESE REASONS AND IN ORDER TO AVOID QTE GRAVER CONSEQUENCES UNQTE, THE LETTER STATES THAT ROMERO PERLA AND THE OTHERS LEFT THE ASSEMBLY, TAKING THE PRESIDING OFFICER WITH THEM, THUS QTE IN THIS MANNER LEGALLY SUSPENDING THE SESSION SO THAT ANY SUBSEQUENT ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE NAME OF THE NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNION COMUNAL SALVADORENA, ARE ABSOLUTELY NULL AND VOID UNQTE. THUS, THE NATIONAL EXECUTIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COUNCIL SUBSEQUENTLY FORMED BY VIERA RAMIREZ, AND MAGANA, IS DECLARED BY THE LETTER TO BE WITHOUT EITHER THE QTE LEGAL OR MORAL APPROVAL OF THE MAXIMUM AUTHORITY OF THE UCS UNQTE AND SHOULD NOT BE RECONGIZED BY THE AUTHORITIES. THE LETTER CONCLUDES BY STATING THAT A NEW NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY WILL HAVE TO BE CALLED AND NEW ELECTIONS TO THE CEN HELD.

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6. IN THE LATE AFTERNOON OF DECEMBER 19, ROMERO PERLA CALLED POLITICAL OFFICER AND GAVE FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF DECEMBER 18 ELECTIONS. HE (PERLA) OPENED GENERAL ASSEMBLY AT 10 AM WITH 538 PROPERLY ACCREDITED DELEGATES PRESENT. SHORTLY THEREAFTER #3 5-53\$ 5#-5 .943 5#-, 100 SUPPORTERS OF TITO CASTRO WITHOUT ANY CREDENTIALS, ENTERED ASSEMBLY HALL, PARTICIPATED IN PROCEEDINGS, AND CALLED FOR VOTE FOR NEW COUNCIL. PERLA STATED CASTRO FACTION LOCKED DOORS AND CREATED GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF DISORDER. PERLA THEN DELCARED THE ASSMBLY ANNULLED AND DEPARTED (ACCORDING TO HIS ACCOUNT) WITH APPROXIMATELY 300 DELEGATES REPRESENTING 8 OF 13 DEPARTMENTS. PERLA STATED A CASTRO AIDE, JOSE RODOLFO VIERA LIZAMA, TOOK OVER MEETING WHICH ELECTED NEW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, ALL SUPPORTERS OF CASTRO. PERLA ADDED THAT CASTRO GROUP HAS BEGUN TODAY TO TAKE OVER UCS HEADQUARTERS AND GET RID OF ALL FORMER OPPONENTS.

7. EMBOFF TOLAD PERLA THAT HIS VERSION, IF CORRECT AND IT WAS ONLY VERSION THUS FAR RECEIVED BY EMBASSY, WOULD APPEAR TO INVALIDATE ELECTION. HE SUGGESTED THAT PERLA AND HIS FACTION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TALK WITH APPROPRIATE GOES AUTHORITIES ABOUT POSSIBLY HOLDING NEW GENERAL ASSEMBLY. EMBOFF STATED HE WAS VERY INTERESTED IN PERLA REPORT BUT AS HAD BEEN OFTER REITERATED TO ALL MEMBERS OF UCS NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COUNCIL, EMBASSY COULD NOT AND WOULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN INTERNAL POLITICS OF UCS, WE WISHED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH DULY ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF UCS AND WOULD SUPPORT THEIR ORGANIZATION IN EVERY WAY POSSIBLE. PERLA REPLIED US GOVERNMENT ALREADY INVOLVED IN UCS INTERNAL AFFAIRS SINCE IT PAYS SALARY OF PERSON WHO MANIPULATED ELECTION (I.E. TITO CASTRO). EMBOFF REPLIED CASTRO IS REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE OF AIFLD AND NOT EMBASSY OFFICIAL. AGAIN EMBOFF STATED THAT, IF PERLA AND OTHERS FELT THAT ELECTIONS WERE FRAUDULENT THEY SHOULD SEEK ASSISTANCE OF GOES. EMBOFF ADDED THAT HE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE BEING KEPT INFORMED ABOUT DEVELOPMENTS. PERLA ENDED CONVERSATION BY STATING THAT DELEGATIONS FROM HIS FACTION WOULD MEET DECEMBER 20 TO DECIDE ON FUTURE ACTIONS WHICH COULD INCLUDE REUYESTING ASSISTANCE OF MINISTER OF INTERIOR AND/OR BRINGING JUDICIAL ACTION AGAINST TITO CASTRO AND OTHERS.

8. ACCORDING TO REPORTS RECEIVED BY EMBASSY, JOSE RODOLFO VIERA LIZAMA WAS DESIGNATED BY THE CASTRO GROUP AS THE NEW SECRETARY-GENERAL. VIERA IS AROUND 35 YEARS OLD, FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF SAN MIGUEL, AND HAS SERVED AS SECRETARY-GENERAL BEFORE, BEING FIRST ELECTED IN DECEMBER 1972 AND SUBSEQUENTLY RE-ELECTED IN 1973 AND 1974. ALSO, EMBASSY HAS HEARD UN-CONFIRMED REPORTS THAT JORGE CAMACHO IS TO BE FIRED AS ADMINI-STRATIVE ADVISOR TO THE UCS AND REPLACED BY A MAN NAMED

BOLANOS.

9. COMMENT: THE ALLEGATIONS OF ROMERO PERLA AND THE OTHER SEVERN ERSTWHILE MEMBERS OF THE CEN MUST BE TREATED WITH SOME CAUTION AS THE EMBASSY HAS YET TO HEAR THE FULL STORY FROM TITO CASTRO'S GROUP. BECAUSE OF THE FACT THAT THERE WERE, TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE EMBASSY'S KNOWLEDGE, NO NEUTRAL OR IMPARTIAL OBSERVERS AT THE DECEMBER 18 ELECTIONS, IT MAY PROVE HIGHLY DIFFICULT TO ASCERTAIN IF THE IRREGULARITIES ALLEGED BY ROMERO PERLA TO HAVE TAKEN PLACE ACTUALLY OCCURRED OR IF THIS IS A CASE OF SORE LOSERS TRYING TO CHANGE A VALID ELECTION RESULT. IN A DECEMBER 20 INTERVIEW BY THE AMBASSADOR AND THE DCM WITH THE MINISTER OF LABOR, LIEUTENANT COLONEL ROBERTO ESCOBAR GARCIA, IN WHICH A VARIETY OF TOPICS WERE DISCUSSED, ESCOBAR MADE REFERENCE TO THE QTE SUSPENSION UNQTE OF THE UCS CONGRESS AS OUTLINED IN A COPY HE HAD RECEIVED FROM ROMERO PERLA OF THE SAME LETTER RECEIVED BY THE EMBASSY. THE AMBASSADOR AND THE DCM CAUTIONED THAT THIS WAS ONLY ONE SIDE OF THE STORY AND THAT THE OTHER SIDE HAD YET TO BE HEARD FROM.
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Message Attributes

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Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
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